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THE HEBREW IDEA OF THE FUTURE LIFE

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II

THE PRIMITIVE CULT OF THE DEAD

In a previous article¹ it was found to be the universal belief of antiquity that disembodied spirits not only survived death, but also gained large powers not possessed in life. They were thus super-human beings, and in many ancient languages were called by the same names as the gods, e.g., in Babylonian, *ilâni*, in Hebrew, *êlôhîm*. It was natural, accordingly, that they should receive homage similar in kind to that paid to the gods and to other spirits.²

The mourning and funeral rites of the ancient Hebrews were closely similar to those of the other Semites, and have also many analogies in the customs of primitive and uncivilized races throughout the world. There can be no doubt, therefore, that they belonged to the earliest period of the religion of Israel.³

1. *Removal of garments*.—Among the ancient Arabs it was customary to strip one's self when mourning for the dead. Women exposed not only their faces and breasts, but sometimes their entire bodies. Messengers that brought tidings of death appeared naked

¹ *Biblical World*, January, 1910, pp. 8-20.

² See Spencer, *Principles of Sociology*, I, chaps. xx, xxv; Tylor, *Primitive Culture*, chap. xiv; De la Saussaye, *Manual of the Science of Religion*, pp. 112 ff.; Jevons, *Introduction to the History of Religion*, chap. xv; Hastings, *Encyclopaedia of Religion and Ethics*, arts "Ancestor-Worship," "Animism."

³ The most important works on ancestor-worship among the Hebrews are: Stade, *Geschichte des Volkes Israel* (1881), I, 387 ff.; *Biblische Theologie* (1905), 185 ff.; Schwally, *Das Leben nach dem Tode nach den Vorstellungen des alten Israels* (1892); Frey, *Tod, Seelenglaube und Seelenkult im alten Israel* (1898); Charles, *A Critical History of the Doctrine of a Future Life* (1899); Grüneisen, *Der Ahnenkultus und die Urreligion Israels* (1900); Guérinot, "Le culte des morts chez les Hébreux," *Journal Asiatique*, 1904, pp. 441-85; Lods, *La croyance à la vie future et le culte des morts dans l'antiquité israélite* (1908); Margoliouth, "Ancestor-Worship (Hebrew and Jewish)," *Hastings' Encyclopaedia of Religion and Ethics*, I, 444-50, 457-61; Torge, *Seelenglaube und Unsterblichkeitshoffnung im Alten Testament* (1909).

or half-naked.⁴ In like manner the Hebrews, as soon as death occurred, or news of it was received, "tore off" (A. V. "rent") their garments (cf. Mic. 1:8, 11; Isa. 20:2). Originally, doubtless, the mourner remained naked as long as the funeral rites lasted; but, with advancing civilization, this was felt to be indecent; and therefore, after the garments had been torn off, sackcloth was usually girded on (Gen. 37:34; II Sam. 3:31; I Kings 21:27; II Kings 6:30; 19:1; Esther 4:1). The "sackcloth" was merely a kilt of goat or camel's hair, such as had been worn by the forefathers in the desert. It was the nearest approach to nakedness that propriety would allow. Bare feet were unobjectionable, and therefore remained a sign of mourning down to late times (II Sam. 15:30; Ezek. 24:17). In the post-exilic period the Jews were satisfied with merely tearing off the upper garment (Ezra 9:3; Num. 14:6). By the time of Christ the custom was conventionalized into a mere tearing of a small piece out of the robe, or a baring of the arm and shoulder.⁵

The most likely interpretation of this rite is that nakedness, or a simple loincloth, was the primitive Hebrew dress that was retained in mourning because it was a religious exercise. Religion is naturally conservative, and the sacred costume of one age is the everyday attire of the past. The Arabs used to make the circuit of the Ka'ba naked, and even today perform it without shoes and in a simple loincloth. In Babylonian monuments of the earliest period the worshipers are depicted naked; in later times they wear a kilt.⁶ The case of Saul, who stripped off his garments when he prophesied, and lay all night naked (I Sam. 19:24), shows that in early times nudity was regarded as the proper condition for a seer. Even in later days the prophets wore the primitive skin apron ("hairy mantle"; II Kings 1:8; Zech. 13:4; Matt. 3:4; Mark 1:6). Sandals were removed from the feet when entering holy ground (Exod. 3:5; Josh. 5:15). Similarly one stripped one's self and removed one's sandals when mourning because one was about to take part in the

⁴ Wellhausen, *Reste arabischen Heidentums*², pp. 177, 195.

⁵ Buchler, *Zeitschrift für die alttestamentliche Wissenschaft*, XXI, 81-92; Jastrow, "The Tearing of Garments as a Sign of Mourning," *Journal American Oriental Society*, XXI, 23.

⁶ Jastrow, *Religion of Babylonia and Assyria*, p. 666.

cult of the dead.⁷ This rite was forbidden to the high-priest (Lev. 21:10) as it was an act of worship to another deity than Yahweh.

2. *Covering the head*.—In singular contrast to the custom of stripping the body was the other custom of covering the head or mouth, or laying the hand on the head as an act of mourning (II Sam. 13:19; 15:30; 19:4; Esther 6:12; Ezek. 24:17, 22; Mic. 3:7). The most natural interpretation of this ceremony is suggested by Exod. 3:6; I Kings 19:13, where the prophets cover their heads in the presence of Yahweh so as to protect themselves from death if they looked upon him (Exod. 33:20). In like manner covering the head in mourning was probably originally designed to protect one from inadvertently seeing the ghost that lingered near the corpse.

3. *Cuttings in the flesh*.—These are referred to in Jer. 16:6; 41:5; 47:5; 48:37 as established forms of mourning to which the prophet does not object. In Lev. 19:28 they are associated with tattooed marks. Similar cuttings for the dead were made by the Arabs (Wellhausen, *Reste*,² 181). The fact that they are prohibited by Lev. 19:28; 21:5, and Deut. 14:1 shows that they are known to be religious rites in honor of the dead. Lev. 19:28 states expressly that they are made "for a spirit." The interpretation of the custom is furnished by I Kings 18:28, where the prophets of Baal cut themselves in honor of their god. As W. Robertson Smith has shown,⁸ cuttings in the flesh, whether practiced in the name of gods or of ghosts, were designed to make a sacrifice of blood, and to establish a blood-covenant. In the case of ghosts they were peculiarly acceptable as supplying strength to their feeble forms.⁹ Tattooing was designed to mark one as a permanent worshiper of the deity.

4. *Cutting the hair*.—Among the Arabs women cut off their hair in mourning, and men shorn the head and the beard.¹⁰ The Hebrews shaved the head (Mic. 1:16; Isa. 15:2; 22:12; Jer. 16:6; 47:5; 48:37; Deut. 21:12; Lev. 21:5), made a "bald spot between the eyes" (Deut. 14:1), or shaved off the beard (Isa. 15:2; Jer. 41:5;

⁷ See Jastrow, "The Tearing of Garments as a Symbol of Mourning," *Jour. Am. Orient. Soc.*, XXI, 23 ff.

⁸ *Religion of the Semites*², pp. 322 ff.

⁹ Cf. Jevons, *Introduction to the History of Religion*, pp. 191 ff.

¹⁰ Wellhausen, *Reste*², pp. 181.

48:37). In later times a little of the hair was plucked out as a ceremonial equivalent. This performance also must be interpreted as an act of worship to the dead (cf. *Iliad*, xxiii, 169 ff.). Hair-offerings to deities were common throughout the Semitic world, and were analogous to blood-offerings, the strength being supposed to reside in the hair.¹¹ In Israel the hair of the nazirite was dedicated to Yahweh, and was presented as a sacrifice when his vow expired (Num. 6:5, 18; Judg. 13:5; 16:17). The prohibition of cutting the hair for the dead in Lev. 21:5; Deut. 14:1 shows also that it was regarded as a religious ceremony.

5. *Covering with dust or ashes*.—The Arabs, when mourning, cast dust upon their bodies or their heads.¹² The Hebrews seem originally to have wallowed in the dust (Mic. 1:10; Jer. 6:26; Ezek. 27:30; Esther 4:3). Subsequently they sat in the dust (Isa. 26:19; 47:1; 52:2; 58:5; Ezek. 28:18; Job. 2:8; Jonah 3:6), or put dust upon their heads (Josh. 7:6; I Sam. 4:12; II Sam. 1:2; 13:19; Esther 4:1; Job 2:12; Lam. 2:10; Ezek. 27:30; II Macc. 10:25; 14:15; Rev. 18:19). This can be only a symbolic act designed to express the thought that one wishes to be buried with the dead and so to maintain communion with them. Analogous is the Arabian custom of drinking water mixed with dust from the grave.¹³

6. *Lamentation*.—Among the ancient Arabs the women broke out in a shrill wail when any member of the family died, and continued this until the period of mourning was over. This was accompanied with frequent ejaculation of the name of the deceased, and with the entreaty, "Be not far away!" Poets also composed extended laments addressed to the dead. Among the Hebrews the lament was a regular and important part of the funeral ceremonies (Gen. 23:2; Deut. 21:13; II Sam. 19:4; I Kings 13:30; II Kings 13:14; Jer. 16:6; 22:10, 18; 34:5; Ezek. 24:16; Acts 9:39). In it the members of the family were assisted by professional mourning men and women (II Chron. 35:25; Jer. 9:17 f.; Am. 5:16). These people had a stock of laments adapted to various occasions that they

¹¹ W. R. Smith, *op. cit.*, pp. 323 ff.; Wellhausen, *Reste*², p. 198.

¹² Wellhausen, *Reste*², p. 177.

¹³ Wellhausen, *Reste*², p. 163; Jastrow, "Dust and Ashes as Symbols of Mourning," *Jour. Am. Orient. Soc.*, XX, 133 ff.

chanted before the corpse.¹⁴ In the case of important persons special dirges were composed (II Sam. 1:17; 3:33).

Some lamentations are doubtless to be regarded as natural expressions of grief, but this will not explain official mournings in which the entire nation took part (e.g., Gen. 50:7-10; Deut. 34:8; Num. 20:29; Judg. 11:40; I Sam. 25:1; 28:3; II Sam. 1:12; 3:32; Zech. 12:10-14). The only tenable theory is that such laments were acts of homage paid to the departed. This view is confirmed by the following facts: (1) the Hebrew laments, like those of the ancient Arabs, were always addressed to the dead (cf. II Sam. 1:26; 3:34; Jer. 22:18; 34:5); (2) similar laments were customary in the worship of the gods (cf. Judg. 11:40 with Ezek. 8:14; Zech. 12:11); (3) lamentation, like other acts of mourning, was repugnant to Yahweh as part of the cult of rival divinities (Deut. 26:14; Hos. 9:4; Am. 6:10).

7. *Fasting*.—Fasting usually lasted until the evening of the day of death (II Sam. 1:12; 3:35; 12:21). When it was continued over a longer period, e.g., seven days (I Sam. 31:13), food was taken only after the sun had set, as in the Muhammadan feast of Ramaḍān. The origin of this custom is difficult to explain. A natural reluctance to take food when one was sorrowing does not account for the fasting of people who were in no way related to the deceased, nor for the feast which followed the burial. Jevons and Grüneisen hold that a death in the house rendered everything taboo, so that food could not be eaten until the corpse was removed. W. R. Smith suggests that fasting was a ritual preparation for the sacrificial feast that followed, like the Roman Catholic fasting before communion. Spencer, Lubbock, Tylor, and Buhl regard it as a means of inducing ecstasy, in which one held intercourse with the spirits (cf. Exod. 34:28; Dan. 9:3; 10:3). In any case it is unquestionable that fasting was a ritual act.

8. *Burial*.—Immediately after death the eyes of the corpse were closed (Gen. 46:4), probably also the mouth, though this does not happen to be mentioned before the Mishna. The body was then washed (Acts 9:37), anointed with perfumed oils (Mark 16:1; Luke 24:1; John 12:3, 7; 19:40), dressed in its best attire, and

¹⁴ See Budde, "The Folk-Song of Israel," *New World*, March, 1893.

bound up in the position of an unborn child, as we know from the remains in early Hebrew tombs in Palestine (cf. Matt. 27:59; Mark 15:46; Luke 23:53). These customs are not mentioned in the Old Testament, but their antiquity is proved by the fact that they existed also among the Babylonians and the Arabs.¹⁵ Burial was the universal Semitic custom; indeed, the word *kabar*, "bury," is common to all the Semitic languages. As in the modern Orient, the interment probably took place in the evening of the day of death, which explains why fasting usually lasted until the evening (II Sam. 1:12; 3:35; 12:21; cf. Deut. 21:23). The body was carried to the grave on a bier (II Sam. 3:31), and coffins were unknown in the early period. The poor were laid on the ground, or in a shallow trench, and were covered with a mound of earth. The rich were buried in caves or in artificial tombs that they had hewn out for themselves during their lifetime (Gen. 23:9; II Kings 23:16; Isa. 22:16). In pre-exilic days these tombs were entered by holes in the roofs, and the dead were deposited one above the other in layers on the floor.¹⁶ On the importance attached to burial in the family tomb see the previous article (*Biblical World*, January, 1910, p. 15). With the dead were deposited food and drink, pottery, lamps, implements, weapons, ornaments, amulets, and images of various sorts.¹⁷ Many of the articles were broken, the idea being doubtless to liberate their spirits so that they might join the spirit of the dead.

9. *The sanctity of tombs.*—By all ancient peoples the graves of forefathers were regarded as holy places where regular religious rites were kept up. By the ancient Arabs they were surrounded with a *hima*, or sacred inclosure, and were provided with *ansâb*, or standing stones, like the sanctuaries of the gods. They were also asylums where criminals found refuge. At them all the rites of sacrifice went on that were usual in the worship of the gods.¹⁸ In modern Muhammadan lands the cult of saints is one of the most conspicuous elements of the popular religion. There is scarcely a hilltop that is not crowned with the whitewashed tomb of some *wely*, "patron," *sheikh*,

¹⁵ King, *Babylonian Religion*, pp. 48 ff.; Wellhausen, *Reste*², p. 178.

¹⁶ *Palestine Exploration Fund, Quarterly Statement*, 1904, pp. 328 ff.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 332-35.

¹⁸ Wellhausen, *Reste*², p. 184.

“chief” or *neby*, “prophet.” In the worship offered at these shrines Jews, Christians, Muhammadans, and Druses alike participate.¹⁹

A similar reverence for graves existed among the ancient Hebrews. The Book of Genesis and the other early historical books record the burial places of the forefathers with the same interest that they show in tracing the origin of the numerous holy springs, holy trees, holy mountains, and holy stones. That they enjoyed a similar sanctity

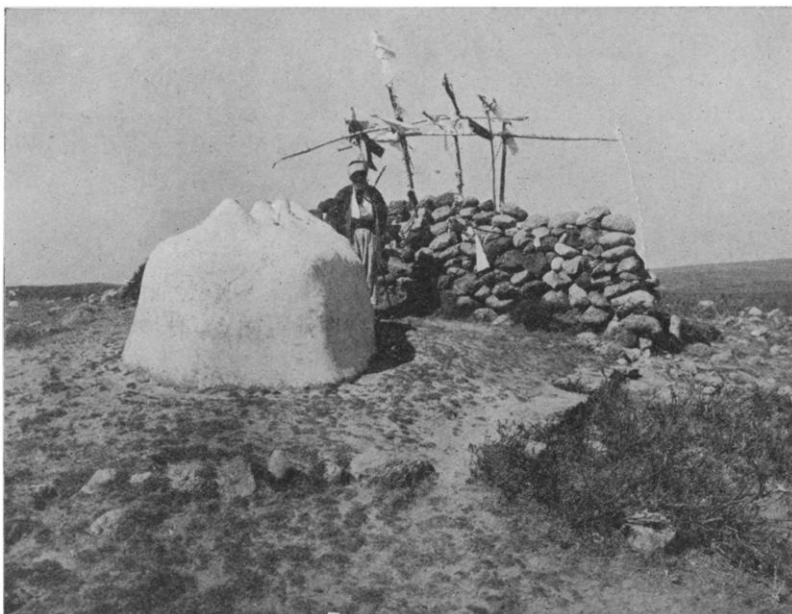


Photo. by L. B. Paton

TOMB OF SHEIKH ABDULLAH ET BEDAWY NEAR DAMASCUS

is proved by numerous references to them as seats of worship. At Hebron, the burial place of Sarah and Abraham (Gen. 23:19; 25:9), the chiefs made a covenant (II Sam. 5:3) and Absalom paid his vows (II Sam. 15:7, 12). It was a “city of refuge” (Josh. 20:7) and a city of the priests (Josh. 21:11). According to Sozomen²⁰ religious rites were kept up here as late as Christian times. The Ḥaram, or “sanctuary,” that covers the supposed cave of Machpelah is still one of the chief holy places of Islam, and Jews come thither from all parts

¹⁹ Curtiss, *Ursemitische Religion*, pp. 154 ff.

²⁰ *Histor. eccl.*, II, 4.

of the world to pray to Abraham and Sarah. At Ramah, the burial place of Rachel (Gen. 35:19; I Sam. 10:2; Jer. 31:15), there was a holy stone upon her grave. On the grave of Deborah below Bethel there stood a tree known as *Allôn-bâkhûth*, "the holy tree of weeping" (Gen. 35:8). The burial place of Miriam was *Kadesh*, "the sanctuary" (Num. 20:1). Shechem, the burial-place of Joseph (Josh. 24:32), was the site of a holy tree called "the oak of the oracle," or "the oak of the diviners" (Gen. 12:6; Deut. 11:30; Judg. 9:37), of a holy stone (Josh. 24:26 f.), of an altar (Gen. 12:7; 22:9) and of a temple (Judg. 9:4, 46). It was also a city of refuge (Josh. 20:7). Of similar character as sanctuaries were probably the graves of the heroes Tola (Judg. 10:1 f.), Jair (Judg. 10:3-5), Ibzan (Judg. 12:8-10), Elon (Judg. 12:11 f.), and Abdon (Judg. 12:13-15).

The Book of Kings records with equal care the burial places of the kings of Judah. Ezek. 43:7-9 shows clearly that in his day these were seats of worship. The words "whoredom" and "abomination" that he applies to them are the ones that are commonly used by the prophets for the cult of strange gods. Isa. 65:3 f. speaks also of people who provoke Yahweh to his face continually, "who dwell among the graves and lodge in the vaults."

The "uncleanness" of graves in the later Hebrew religion is additional proof that originally they were places of worship. Among ancient peoples everything connected with death was "taboo," i. e., it could not be touched without falling under the influence of a spirit.²¹ Among the Semites the word for taboo was *kādôsh*, which we commonly render "holy." Into the religion of Yahweh many ancient Semitic taboos were taken up, and continued to be regarded as "holy." Other taboos were felt to belong to inferior spirits or to rival gods, and were now pronounced "unclean." Thus foreign rites make Yahweh's land "unclean" (Jer. 2:7, 23; 3:2, 9; Ezek. 36:18), and alien worship makes the Temple "unclean" (Jer. 7:30; Ezek. 43:7, 9). Now, as we have just seen, the graves of the patriarchs and heroes were at first regarded as "holy," and were favorite places of sacrifice. Archaeology shows that in pre-exilic times the dead were buried without hesitation within the city walls or even in houses,²²

²¹ Jevons, *Introduction to the History of Religion*, chap. vi.

²² *Palestine Exploration Fund, Quarterly Statement*, 1902, p. 347.

and this custom is also attested by I Sam. 25:1; 28:3; I Kings 2:10, 34; 11:43; 14:31, etc.; II Kings 21:18, 26; Ezek. 43:7 f.; but in later literature dead bodies and graves render anyone who touches them ceremonially "unclean" (Deut. 26:14; Ezek. 43:7 f.; Num. 19:11; Matt. 23:27). Bones of the dead defile the altar of Yahweh (I Kings 13:2; II Kings 23:14, 16, 20). This change from "holy" to "unclean" can be explained only as due to a growing consciousness that the ancient sanctity of tombs was inconsistent with the sole authority of Yahweh. Hence corpses and everything connected with them were placed under a ban. That this is the correct interpretation of the taboo is shown, (1) by the fact that it is called "uncleanness for a spirit" (*nefesh*) (Lev. 21:1, 11; 22:4; Num. 5:2; 6:6, 11; 9:6 f., 10; 19:11 f.; Hag. 2:13), which shows that the uncleanness does not come from the corpse but from the spirit associated with it; (2) by the fact that priests, who are specially connected with the worship of Yahweh, are allowed to "defile themselves for a spirit" only in a few exceptional cases (Lev. 21:1-4, 11), and that nazirites are not allowed to defile themselves at all (Num. 6:6).

10. *Sacrifice*.—By all primitive peoples sacrifices were offered upon the grave in addition to the gifts of food, drink, etc., that were buried with the corpse. Thus in the *Odyssey* (xi.28-46) Ulysses pours out to the shades the blood of sheep, and makes libations of milk, honey, wine, and water, on which white meal is sprinkled.²³

Among the Arabs the cooking-pot and dishes of the deceased were broken, and his camel was lamed and tethered near the grave to die of starvation. About 1100 A. D. certain Arabs of northern Yemen honored a dead chief by breaking a thousand swords and three hundred bows, and by laming seventy horses. Not merely at the time of burial, but also subsequently camels were slain. An early poet laments that he cannot sacrifice his camel to his friend because it is the only one that he possesses. Besides blood, libations of water and of milk were poured upon graves, and the wish was expressed that much rain might fall upon them. In some parts of Arabia fragrant wood was burned as incense. These customs have

²³ See Jevons, *Introduction*, pp. 51 f.; D'Alviella, *Hibbert Lectures*, p. 17; De la Saussaye, *Manual*, pp. 114 f.

lasted down to the present day both among the Bedawin and among the Arabs of Syria.²⁴

Among the Babylonians sacrifices and libations were offered periodically at tombs. The regular pouring-out of libations of water was a duty that devolved upon the oldest son, or the legal heir, and that might not be neglected without incurring the wrath of the deceased.²⁵ An ancient bronze tablet represents a dead man lying on a bier, with priests surrounding him, and an altar for burning incense near his head.²⁶ A king of Assyria, whose name is missing, records how he celebrated the obsequies of his father, and closes with the words: "Gifts unto the princes, unto the spirits of the earth, and unto the gods who inhabit the grave, I then presented."²⁷ King Ashurbanipal also records that he invoked the shades of his ancestors, and poured out libations in their honor.

Among the Hebrews the persistence of sacrifice to the dead down to a late time is attested by the confession in Deut. 26:14, "I have not given thereof for the dead." According to Josephus (*Ant.*, XIII, 8, 4; XVI, 7, 1; *War*, I, 2, 5), the tomb of David was filled with treasures; and according to II Chron. 16:14, Asa's tomb was filled with sweet odors and spices, and they made a very great burning for him. According to Jer. 34:5; II Chron. 21:19, this was the usual custom at the burial of kings. Ps. 106:28 declares of the forefathers, "They ate the sacrifices of the dead." Tob. 4:17 commends offerings to the dead: "Pour out thy bread on the tomb of the just;" and similarly Ecclus. 7:33: "A gift hath grace in the sight of every living man, so from a dead man keep not back grace" (cf. II Macc. 12:42 ff.). Ecclus. 30:18 (in the Greek); Ep. Jer., vss. 31 f.; Wisd. 14:15; 19:3; Sibylline Oracles, viii. 382-84; Jubilees, 22:17 mention the cult of the dead as practiced in their day, but regard it as useless and wicked. In later Judaism the saying of the *Kaddish* by the oldest son takes the place of the ancient sacrifices.²⁸

²⁴ Wellhausen, *Reste*², pp. 177-84; Nöldeke, *Hastings' Encyclopaedia of Religion and Ethics*, I, 672; Burckhardt, *Beduinen und Wahaby*, pp. 84 f.; Doughty, *Arabia Deserta*, I, 240, 354, 442, 450 ff.; Curtiss, *Ursemitische Religion*, chap. xix.

²⁵ Jastrow, *Religion of Babylonia*, p. 559.

²⁶ King, *Babylonian Religion*, p. 39.

²⁷ King, *op. cit.*, p. 49.

²⁸ Margoliouth, *Hastings' Encyclopaedia of Religion and Ethics*, I, 459.

Intimately connected with sacrifices to the dead were funeral feasts, in which one partook of the offerings, and thus sealed one's communion with the spirits of the departed. Such feasts have lasted down to modern times in many countries where their original connection with sacrifice has been forgotten. Their existence among the Hebrews is attested by Jer. 16:7: "Neither shall men break bread for a mourner to comfort him for the dead, nor shall one give him the cup of consolation to drink on account of his father or his mother"; also by Ezek. 24:17 (emended text), "Eat not the bread of mourning." Since eating these offerings involved participation in the worship of another god than Yahweh, it rendered one "unclean" (Hos. 9:4; Deut. 26:14).

Sacrifice to the dead explains the importance attached by all ancient peoples to male descendants. Among the Chinese, the Egyptians, the Greeks, the Romans, and other patriarchally organized races, the duty of sacrificing to a father devolved upon his oldest son. If there were no son, there would be no offerings, and the ghost could not rest. Among the Babylonians, if a man had no son, he adopted one. Women also adopted daughters under similar circumstances. Thus, in a tablet of the Cassite period²⁹ we read: "Ina-Uruk-rishat . . . had no daughter, therefore she adopted Eṭirtu So long as Ina-Uruk-rishat lives Eṭirtu is to show her honor. If Ina-Uruk-rishat dies, then shall Eṭirtu, as though she were her daughter, make libations of water for her."

Among the Hebrews also the duty of bringing sacrifices and libations rested upon the oldest son. Hence the double portion given to the firstborn (Deut. 21:15 ff.). Childlessness was regarded as the greatest possible misfortune (Gen. 30:1; I Sam. 1:5 f.), and the proper blessing for a bride was, "Be thou the mother of thousands of ten thousands" (Gen. 24:60). Yahweh punished men even in the other world by cutting off their posterity (Exod. 20:5; 34:7; Num. 14:18; Deut. 5:9), and victors destroyed an enemy's children in order that his ghost might receive no offerings. If a man had no sons by his first wife, he took a second wife, or his wife gave him her female slaves as concubines (Gen. 16:1 f.). If these means failed, a slave, or some person outside of the family, was adopted as a son,

²⁹ Clay, *Documents Dated in the Reigns of Cassite Rulers*, No. 40.

and was given the inheritance on condition that he kept up the ancestral rites (Gen. 15:2 f.). If this device also failed, the nearest male relative of the deceased was required to take his widow and raise up seed for him (Gen. 38:16; Deut. 25:5; Ruth 2:20; 3:13; 4:5). This painful anxiety to secure a son is explainable only by the desire to obtain after death those gifts without which one's soul could not rest.

11. *Prayer*.—In ancient times prayer was the invariable accompaniment of sacrifice. Among the Semites prayer to the dead is well attested. Among the Hebrews also it must have existed in early days, but there is no clear evidence of it in the Old Testament. Laments addressed to the dead come near to it (see above, par. 6), and the calling-up of the dead by necromancy (see below, par. 12) is also closely related. Isa. 63:16, "Thou art our father, though Abraham knoweth us not, and Israel doth not acknowledge us," seems to imply invocation of the patriarchs by some at least of the nation. This cult has not completely died out even from modern Judaism. Abraham is still entreated in much the same way as the saints of Islam or of Roman Catholicism.³⁰ Moses and Elijah are invoked in various parts of the Jewish liturgy, and the prayer to Elijah offered by the Sephardic Jews in modern Palestine differs in no respect from the prayer offered to the Muhammadan patrons.³¹

12. *Necromancy*.—The belief that spirits of the dead could be called up by magic arts to assist the living, or to reveal the future, was held by the Semites in common with other ancient peoples. The Arab magician had his *tābi'* or "follower," i. e., his familiar spirit. In Babylonia "raiser of the departed spirit" was the standing title of the necromancer. In the *Gilgamesh Epic* (tablet xii, col. 3) we have an account of how Gilgamesh raised the ghost of Eabani and held converse with him. In ancient Israel such arts must have existed from the beginning. Necromancy was common in the time of Saul, although it was regarded as inconsistent with the religion of Yahweh (I Sam. 28: 7-9). Isaiah still had reason to denounce it: "When they say unto you, Consult the ghosts and the familiar spirits that gibber and moan, give this answer: Should not a people rather

³⁰ Winterbotham, "The Cultus of Father Abraham," *Expositor*, 1896, pp. 177-86.

³¹ Margoliouth, in *Hastings' Encyclopedia of Religion and Ethics*, I, 458 ff.

consult its God? On behalf of the living, should men consult the dead?" (Isa. 8:19; cf. 19:3; 28:15, 18; 29:4). This practice flourished in the time of Manasseh (II Kings 21:6), and Josiah made an effort to abolish it (II Kings 23:24). It seems to be mentioned also in Isa. 57:9; 65:4. The prohibition of necromancy by Deuteronomy (18:11) and by the Holiness Code (Lev 19:31; 20:6, 27) shows that it was common in the later days of the monarchy, but that it was regarded by the religious leaders of the nation as irreconcilable with the exclusive worship of Yahweh.

From the foregoing survey it appears that the cult of the dead was one of the most ancient and most firmly intrenched forms of religion among the Hebrews. The religion of Yahweh encountered no more formidable rival, and centuries of conflict were necessary before it was finally overcome. The history of that conflict will be the theme of a later article.